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INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0440
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0288
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1833
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2686
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 4569
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KARACHI 000102

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH BALOCHISTAN GOVERNOR

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY ACTING CONSUL GENERAL CATHERINE RODRIGUEZ
FOR REASONS 1.4 b and d.

Summary:

1. (C) During a March 19 meeting with the Ambassador, Balochistan Governor Nawab Zulfiqar Khan Magsi suggested targeting new USG development assistance at improving water resources and agricultural productivity. Magsi, a tribal chief, downplayed the benefit of building schools and hospitals for a migratory population. He claimed the media had exaggerated the extent of the nationalist insurgency and suggested the federal government allow the province more leeway in conducting its operations. Magsi also voiced support for using tribal levies to police rural areas.

Water, Agricultural Development Assistance Needed

2. (C) On March 19, the Ambassador met with Balochistan Governor Nawab Zulfiqar Khan Magsi at his office in Quetta. The Ambassador told the Governor that the USG planned to increase troop presence in southern Afghanistan and shipment of supplies to Afghanistan through Chaman. She outlined USG plans to increase assistance projects in the province. Magsi responded enthusiastically to the possibility of additional USG funding.

3. (C) He pointed to water development projects, such as dams and wells, as his province's most pressing need and advised that this should come before other efforts such as construction of schools and hospitals. Magsi explained that critical water shortages were causing substantial population migrations in Balochistan. Lack of potable water has additionally been a factor in the spread of many diseases.

4. (C) Magsi also asked for help developing the province's agricultural sector. He opined that this type of assistance would be more valuable than building schools or hospitals, since much of the population is migratory and could not benefit as much from fixed structures. Magsi added that market access is an important development issue for the province. For sustained, long-term development, the government has to address its political and security issues, he advised.

Baloch Nationalist Insurgency Overblown

15. (C) Noting that the latest Baloch insurgency began under the previous military government of Musharraf, Magsi said the provincial government is working with the federal government to try to resolve it. He pointed out that the insurgency is not mainstream, but limited to one or two tribes) mainly the Bugtis and the Marri. The main areas of conflict, Magsi noted, are Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts and some parts of Quetta. He complained that media reporting has exaggerated the problem.

16. (C) One of the most prevalent issues fueling the insurgency, he explained, has been the long-standing dispute between the federal and provincial governments over the division of natural resources. (Comment: Baloch nationalists claim that the GOP is exploiting the province's natural resources, particularly natural gas, with little benefit to its inhabitants. End comment.) Magsi suggested that federal government does not have the confidence in the provincial government to allow it to run its own affairs.

Tribal Levies Emphasized

17. (C) Security improvements have been hampered by a corrupt police force, he claimed. To remedy this, Magsi said the provincial government is promoting tribal levies to provide security. Under this plan, police will be responsible for urban areas, such as the city of Quetta. Levies, which will be under the authority of district administrations, will police rural areas. Magsi believes the levies, subject to closer local oversight, will be less likely to be corrupted.

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Comment

18. (C) Magsi, a tribal chief and relative of Marri tribal chief and nationalist leader Khair Bakhsh Marri, has twice served as Chief Minister of Balochistan and spent 17 years in the Provincial Assembly. For part of that period, he was provincial Minister for Education, Planning and Development. Although he appears to favor the traditional tribal structure, which has been cited as a hindrance to development, Magsi has gained a reputation as a moderator in the conflict between the provincial and federal government over resource allocation.
RODRIGUEZ